DC
SECRET ORIGINS
STARRING
16
$1.25
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JULY 87
The GOLDEN AGE
HOURMAN
BY THOMAS & BAIR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
The WARLORD
BY FLEISHER & A. KUBERT
PLUS:
A SHORT ORIGIN OF
mazing man
by ROZAKIS & DeSTEFANO
WHO watches the WATCHMEN?
FLASH
BATMAN
GLOO

THE WARLORD: EXILES

MICHAEL FLEISHER -- SCRIPT
ADAM KUBERT -- ART/LETTERING
JERRY SERPE/COLORING
ROBERT GREENBERGER -- EDITING

* TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN. -- EDITOR BOB

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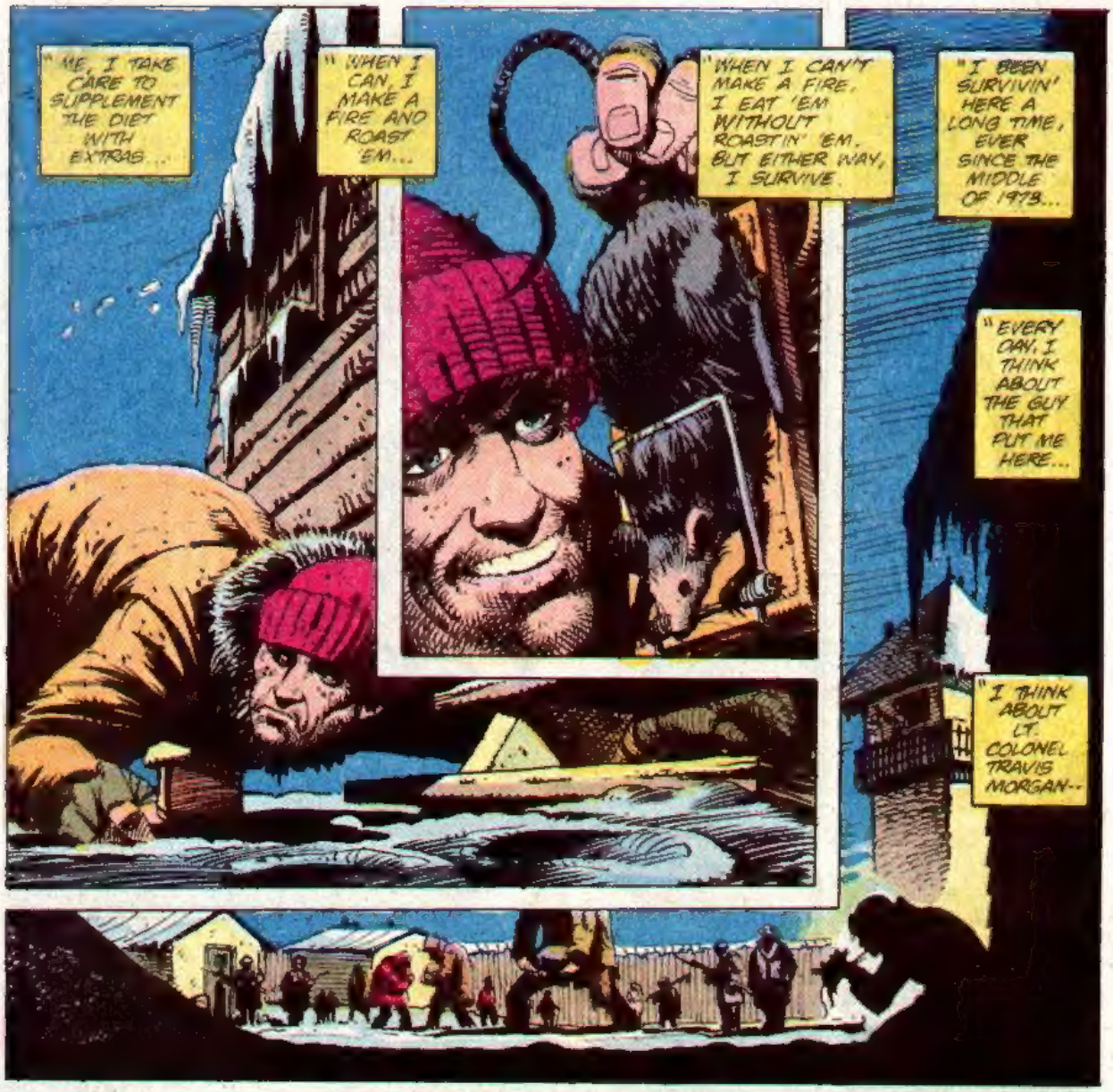
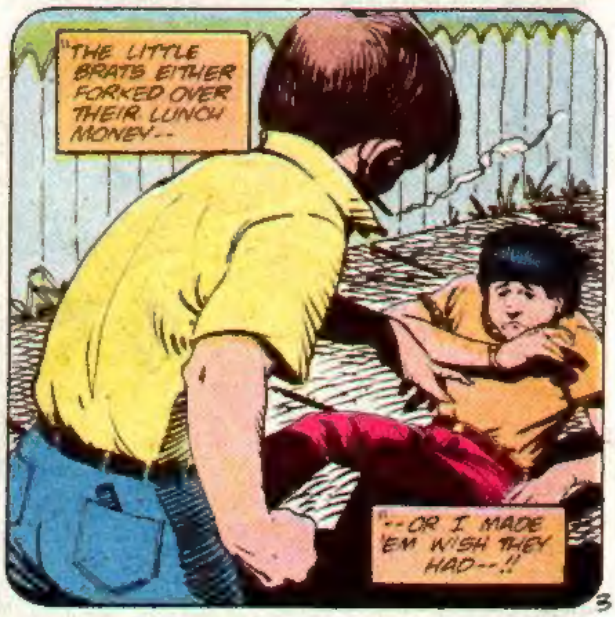
"IT GETS COLD HERE. REAL COLD.
"A LOTTA GUYS CAN'T HACK IT. THEY FREEZE TO DEATH OR THEY STARVE...
"...OR THEY JUST GIVE UP AND KEEL OVER... DEAD.
"SOME GUYS CAN'T TAKE IT, SO THEY GO COMPLETELY NUTS...
"OTHER GUYS TAKE THE SUICIDAL ROUTE. MEANING--
BRAP BRRRP
GHAAAA
"--THEY TRY TO ESCAPE--!!
"THE FOOD HERE AIN'T GREAT, BY THE WAY.
"THE FACT IS, I'D RATHER EAT BRICKS.
2


"ME, I TAKE CARE TO SUPPLEMENT THE DIET WITH EXTRAS..."
"WHEN I CAN, I MAKE A FIRE AND ROAST 'EM..."
"WHEN I CAN'T MAKE A FIRE, I EAT 'EM WITHOUT ROASTIN' 'EM. BUT EITHER WAY, I SURVIVE."
"I BEEN SURVIVIN' HERE A LONG TIME, EVER SINCE THE MIDDLE OF 1973..."
"EVERY DAY, I THINK ABOUT THE GUY THAT PUT ME HERE..."
"I THINK ABOUT LT. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN--"

"--AND ABOUT HOW IT ALL GOT STARTED BETWEEN HIM AND ME WAY BACK AT THOMAS JEFFERSON JR. HIGH..."
"I HAD ME A PRETTY CUTE LITTLE SHAKE-DOWN RACKET GOING THERE..."


"THE LITTLE BRATS EITHER FORKED OVER THEIR LUNCH MONEY--"
"--OR I MADE 'EM WISH THEY HAD--!!"

"THEN ONE DAY..."
YOU'D BETTER START EMPTYIN' OUT YOUR POCKETS, TWERP, OR I'LL CAVE IN YOUR FACE!
DANNY MADDOX, YOU--YOU BULLY! LEAVE MY BROTHER ALONE!
SHE'S RIGHT, DANNY!
CHUCK'S MY BEST FRIEND! I DON'T WANT YOU TO BOTHER HIM ANYMORE!
YOU WANT ME TO BUST YOUR HEAD INSTEAD, MORGAN?
OKAY, YOU--
HUH--!?
"TO THIS DAY, I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE BEAT ME.
CHOK
"AS BEST I CAN FIGURE IT, HE MUSTA JUST GOT LUCKY...
"AND BESIDES, WHAT THE HELL? I DIDN'T REALLY WANT CHUCKIE'S LUNCH MONEY ANYWAY..."
YOU WERE SUPER, TRAVIS, THANKS!

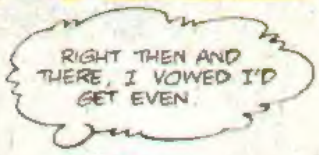
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

WHO KNOWS
WHAT EVIL
AAAAKKK
LURKS
THE SHADOW
All-new monthly series starting in May Deluxe Format
Suggested for mature readers.
Andrew Helfer
Bill Sienkiewicz

I'M CHUCK'S SISTER, RACHEL!
HI!

"THEY STARTED DATING RIGHT AFTER THAT..

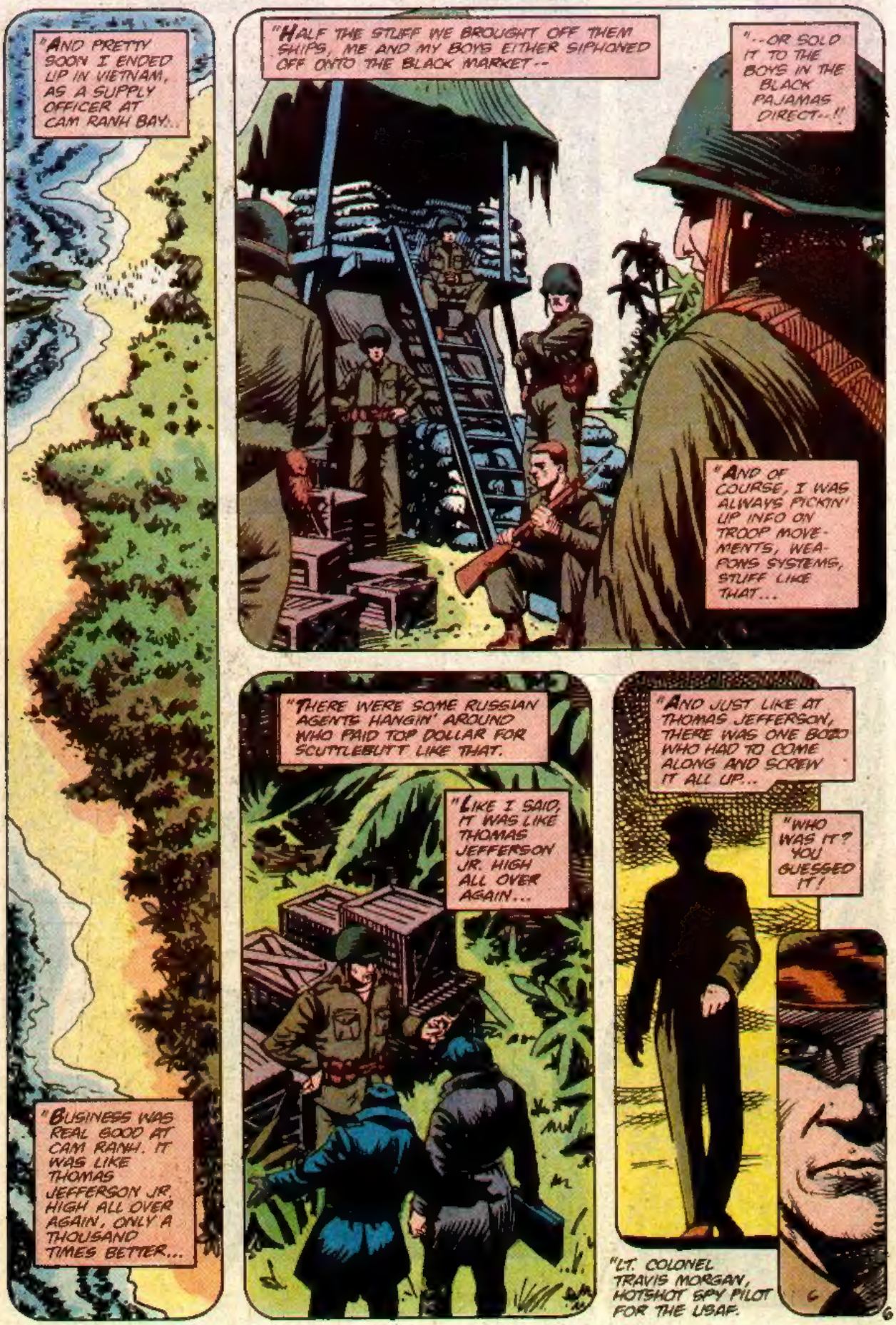
"AND ABOUT SIX SECONDS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THEY TIED THE KNOT..
"PRACTICALLY THE WHOLE SCHOOL WAS INVITED, EXCEPT YOURS TRULY..."


RIGHT THEN AND THERE, I VOWED I'D GET EVEN.

"A WHOLE LOT HAPPENED IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS.
"I JOINED THE AIR FORCE--

"AND EVEN THOUGH THEY ADMITTED I HAD ALL THE RIGHT STUFF--

"--THEY STILL BOOTED ME OUT FOR DERELICTION OF DUTY AND DECKING AN OFFICER.
"SO, WHAT THE HELL, I JOINED THE ARMY. THEY'LL TAKE ANYBODY.


"AND PRETTY SOON I ENDED UP IN VIETNAM, AS A SUPPLY OFFICER AT CAM RANH BAY...
"HALF THE STUFF WE BROUGHT OFF THEM SHIPS, ME AND MY BOYS EITHER SIPHONED OFF ONTO THE BLACK MARKET--
"--OR SOLD IT TO THE BOYS IN THE BLACK PAJAMAS DIRECT--!!
"AND OF COURSE, I WAS ALWAYS PICKIN' UP INFO ON TROOP MOVEMENTS, WEAPONS SYSTEMS, STUFF LIKE THAT...
"BUSINESS WAS REAL GOOD AT CAM RANH. IT WAS LIKE THOMAS JEFFERSON JR. HIGH ALL OVER AGAIN, ONLY A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER...
"THERE WERE SOME RUSSIAN AGENTS HANGIN' AROUND WHO PAID TOP DOLLAR FOR SCUTTLEBUTT LIKE THAT.
"LIKE I SAID, IT WAS LIKE THOMAS JEFFERSON JR. HIGH ALL OVER AGAIN...
"AND JUST LIKE AT THOMAS JEFFERSON, THERE WAS ONE BOZO WHO HAD TO COME ALONG AND SCREW IT ALL UP...
"WHO WAS IT? YOU GUESSED IT!
"LT. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN, HOTSHOT SPY PILOT FOR THE USAF.

"OF COURSE, THE BIRDBRAIN HAD NO IDEA HOW BIG OUR OPERATION REALLY WAS...
"HE PROBABLY THOUGHT HE'D JUST STUMBLED ON A FEW CROOKED GIS HELPING THEMSELVES TO A FEW CRATES OF SUPPLIES.
"AFTER ALL, THAT KINDA CHICKEN-FEED WENT ON ALL THE TIME IN VIETNAM.
"ALL THE SAME, NEXT DAY HE CAME AND REPORTED IT TO THE GUY IN CHARGE, WHICH WAS ME.
"BOY, HE WAS REAL SURPRISED TO SEE ME AGAIN.
"'IT'S A SMALL WORLD,' HE SAID. 'SURE IS,' I SAID.
"I SAID I HOPED THERE WAS NO HARD FEELIN'S ABOUT THAT SCUFFLE WE'D HAD AT THOMAS JEFFERSON.
"'DON'T BE SILLY,' HE SAID. 'THAT'S ANCIENT HISTORY.'
"'BUT THOSE GRUNTS I CAUGHT PILFERING FROM THE WAREHOUSE,' HE SAID, 'YOU'D BETTER PUT THEM ON REPORT.'
"'I'LL DO IT,' I SAID. 'DON'T WORRY.'
"BUT NOW I KNEW MY BIG-MONEY DAYS IN VIETNAM WERE OVER...
"IF I TURNED MY BOYS IN, THEY'D TURN AROUND AND BLOW THE WHISTLE ON ME.
"AND IF I DIDN'T TURN THEM IN, MORGAN WOULD KNOW IT WAS MY SHOW AND HE'D LOWER THE BOOM ON ME.

"I HAD A BUDDY IN AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE, A GUY I'D BEEN CULTIVATIN' FOR INFO TO SELL THE SOVIETS.
"I TOLD HIM I'D PICKED UP A WHISPER ABOUT A TOP-SECRET BACTERIOLOGICAL-WARFARE FACILITY INSIDE THE U.S.S.R.
"I TOLD HIM THEY WERE PRODUCIN' GERM-WARFARE WEAPONS THERE TO USE AGAINST OUR BOYS RIGHT HERE IN 'NAM.
"THE SAP FELL FOR IT LIKE A TON OF BRICKS... SAID THEY'D SEND OUT THEIR TOP SPY PILOT TO SCOPE IT OUT.
"I KNEW IN MY BONES THEY'D SEND MORGAN.
"AND SURE ENOUGH, THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY DID.
THERE SHE IS! NOW TO START CLICKING SOME PIX!
"MY RUSSIAN CONTACTS HAD SMUGGLED ME OUTTA 'NAM A FULL THREE DAYS AHEAD OF MORGAN'S FLIGHT.
LOOK! THERE HE IS!
(PREPARE TO LAUNCH!)
FIRE!
WHOOOSH
"ONE THING YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THE ROOSKIES: ONCE YOU'VE WORKED FOR 'EM, THEY DON'T WANT YOU FALLIN' BACK INTO ENEMY HANDS.

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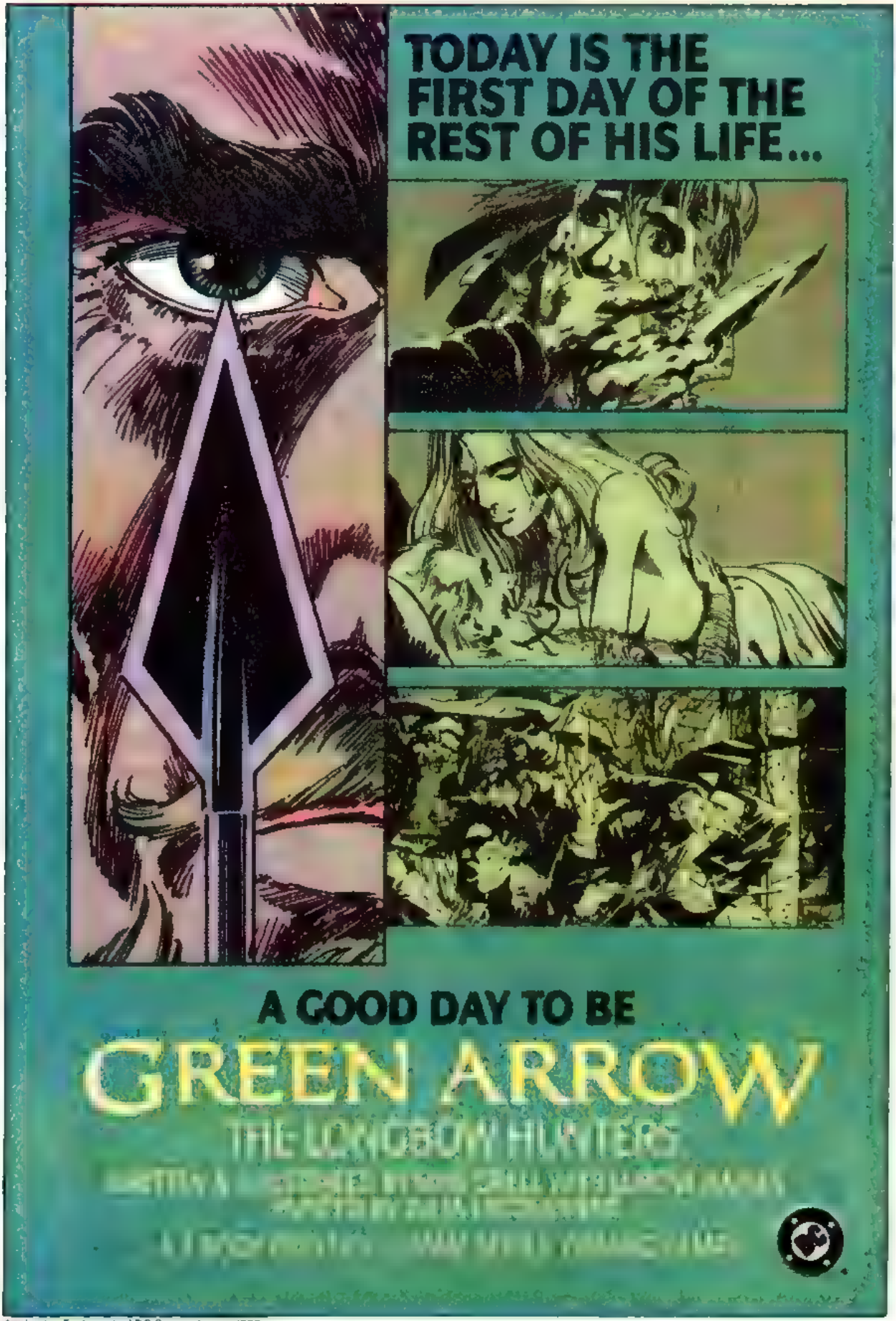

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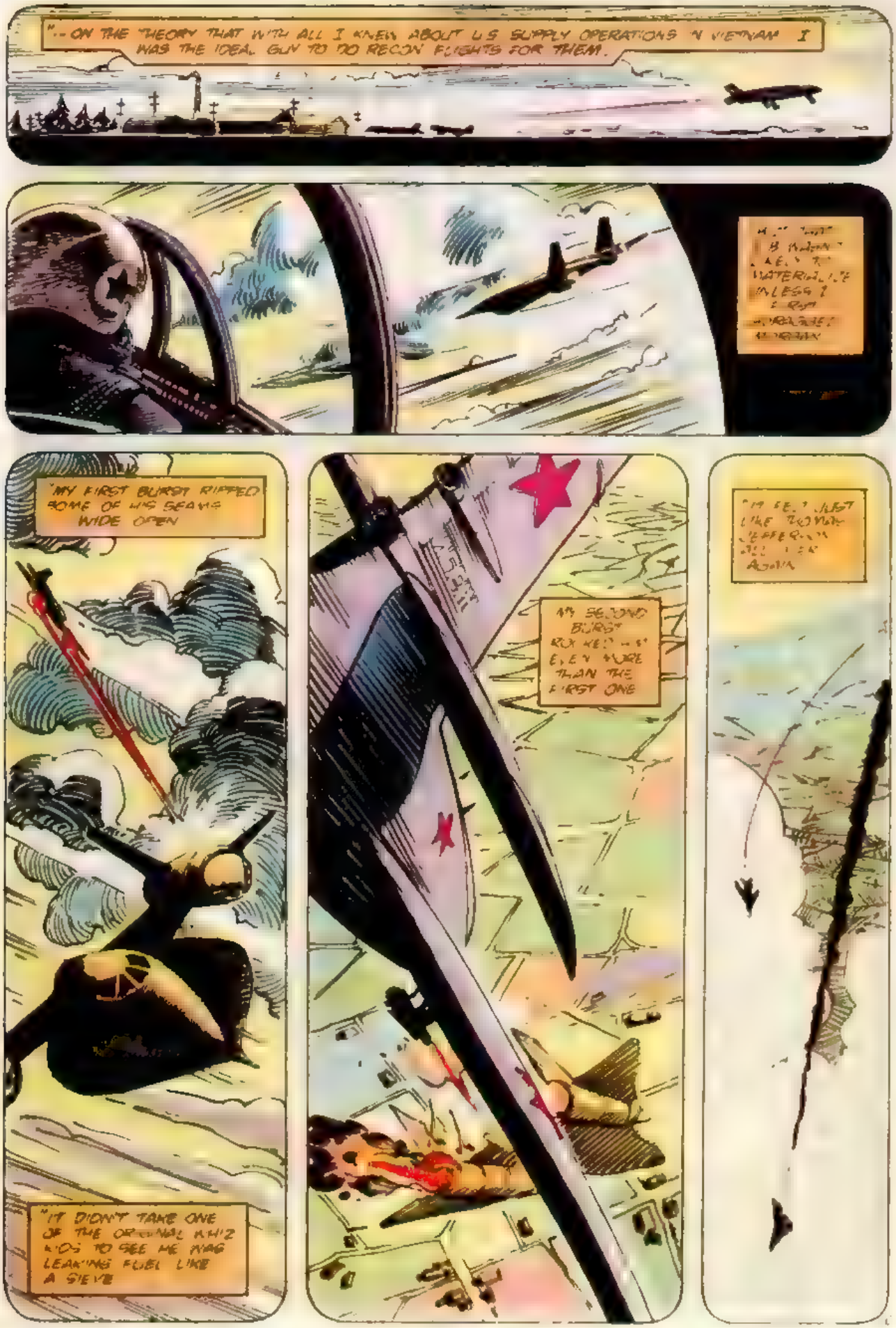
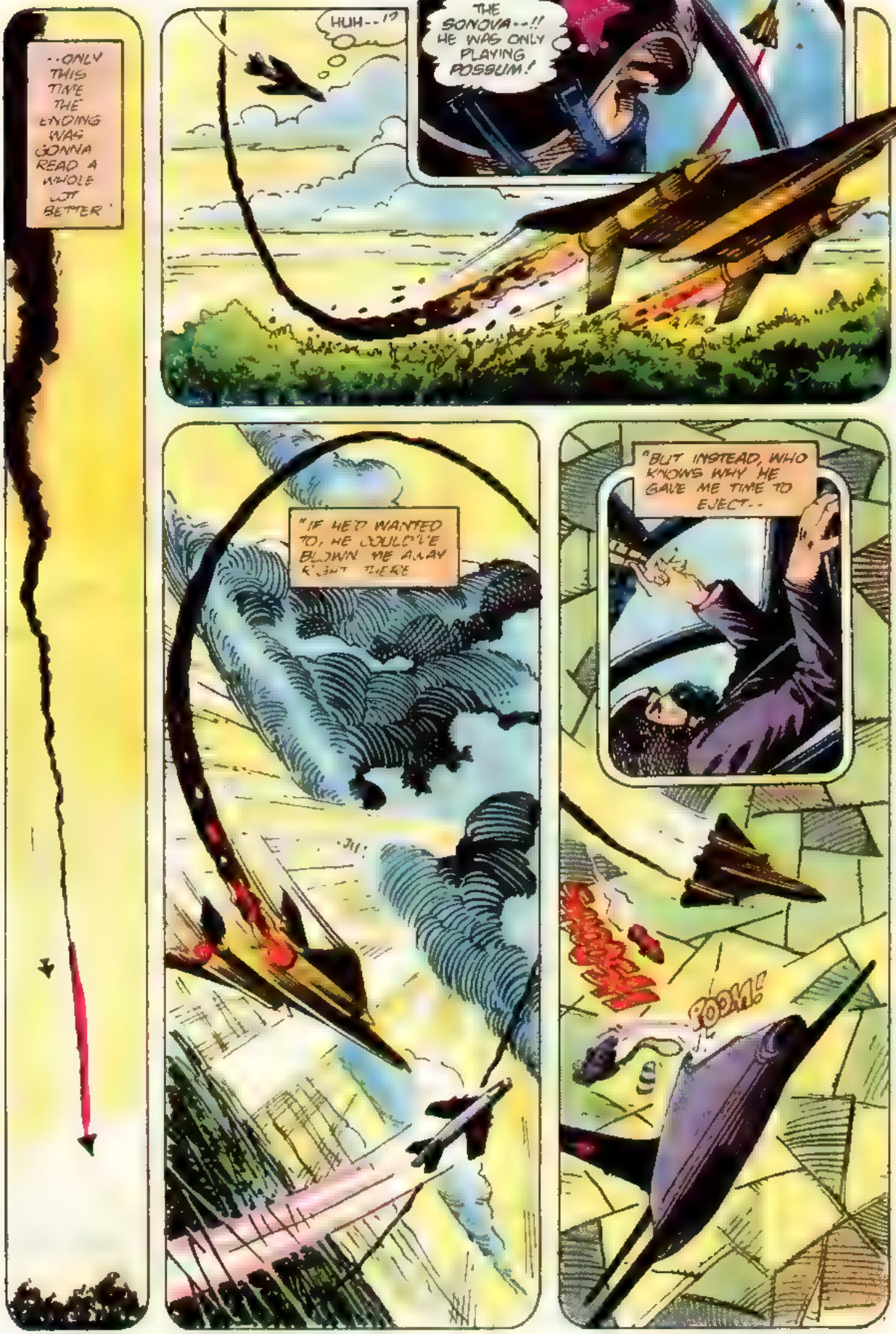
"I DIDN'T NEED FOR HIM TO SPELL IT OUT FOR ME IF MORGAN WASN'T STOPPED--

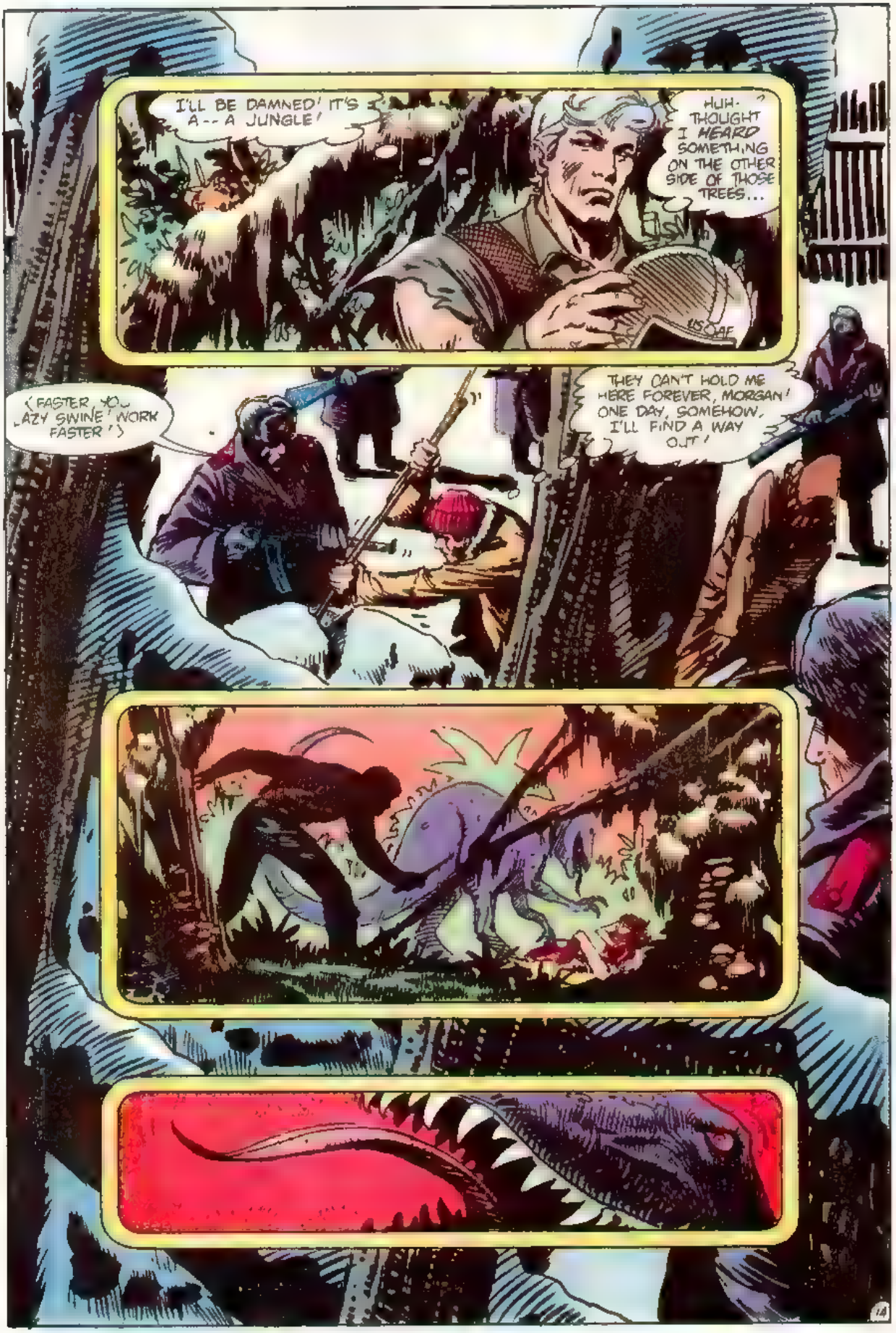
THEY'D ALREADY GIVEN ME A CRASH COURSE IN THEIR OWN FAILURES-


"... ON THE THEORY THAT WITH ALL I KNEW ABOUT U.S. SUPPLY OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM I WAS THE IDEAL GUY TO DO RECON FLIGHTS FOR THEM.
"MY FIRST BURST RIPPED SOME OF HIS SEAMS WIDE OPEN
MY SECOND BURST ROCKETED EVEN MORE THAN THE FIRST ONE
"IT DIDN'T TAKE ONE OF THE ORIGINAL WHIZ KIDS TO SEE HE WAS LEAKING FUEL LIKE A SIEVE

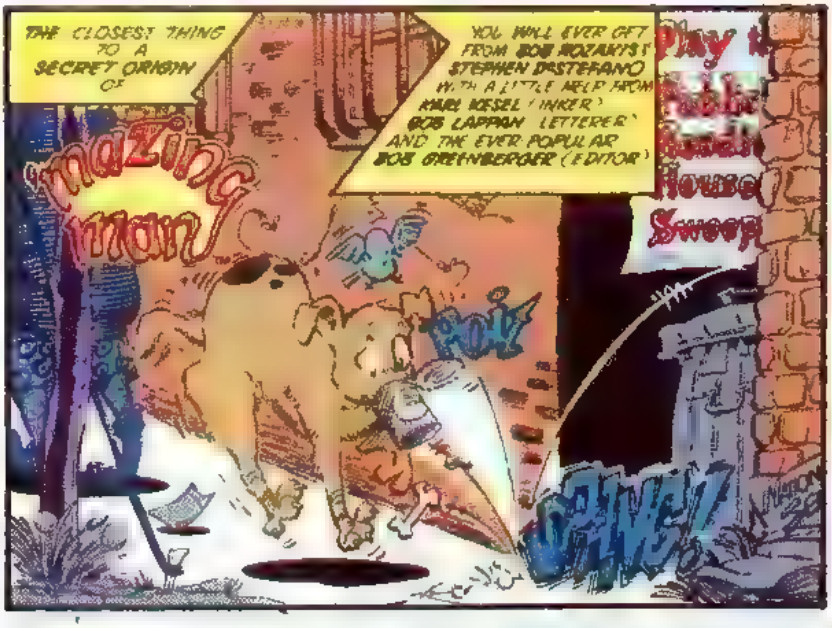

..ONLY THIS TIME THE ENDING WAS GONNA READ A WHOLE LOT BETTER
HUH--!?
THE SONOVA--!! HE WAS ONLY PLAYING POSSUM!
"IF HE'D WANTED TO, HE COULD'VE BLOWN ME AWAY RIGHT THERE
"BUT INSTEAD, WHO KNOWS WHY HE GAVE ME TIME TO EJECT..
KOOM!

"I NEVER SAW TOOLS MORGAN AGAIN AFTER THAT
I FIGURED HE'D HAVE TO TRY FOR AN EMERGENCY SUPPORT BASE IN ALASKA
GOT TO MAKE IT BEFORE MY TANKS RUN DRY"

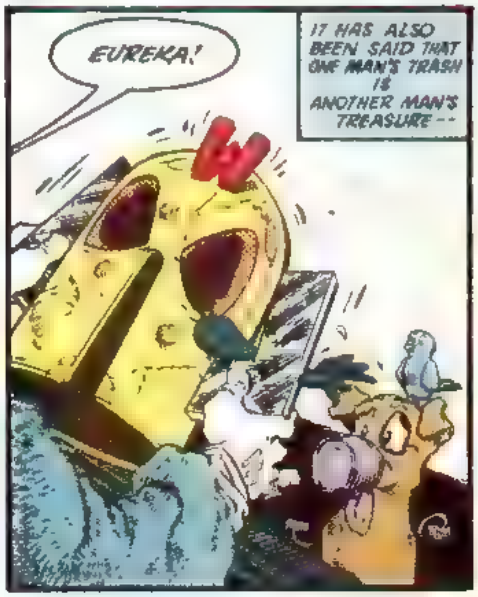
AIR/SEA RESCUE, THIS IS TANGO DELTA NINER! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! DO YOU COPY? OVER!
NO USE! RADIO'S DEAD
AND SO AM I!
FUEL'S GONE! NOW I'M A 2,000-MILE-AN-HOUR GLIDER!
ON ACCOUNT OF I WANTA BE THE GUY WHO PUTS HIS "KNITS OUT"!
IF I DITCH IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN, I DON'T STAND A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN
HEY! LAND! THROUGH THAT BREAK IN THE CLOUDS!
ACCORDING TO THE COMPUTER GUIDANCE SYSTEM, THAT SHOULD BE THE YUKON TERRITORY BELOW!
SO LONG SWEETHEART! TRY NOT TO LAND ON ANYBODY!
UNNGH COULD'VE BEEN A SOFTER LANDING

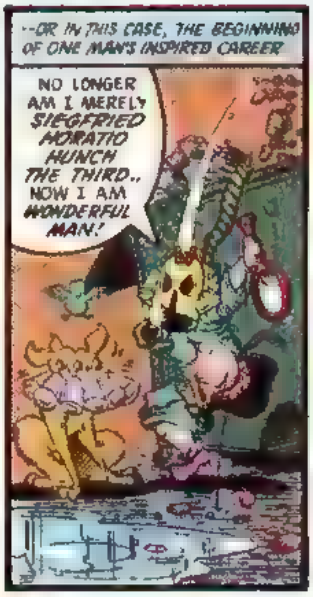

I'LL BE DAMNED! IT'S A-- A JUNGLE!
HUH. THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THOSE TREES...
(FASTER, YOU LAZY SWINE! WORK FASTER!)
THEY CAN'T HOLD ME HERE FOREVER, MORGAN! ONE DAY, SOMEHOW, I'LL FIND A WAY OUT!

AND WHEN I DO MORGAN, I'LL TRACK YOU DOWN AND I'LL KILL YOU
"... YOU'VE GOT MY WORD ON IT !! "
END


THE CLOSEST THING TO A SECRET ORIGIN OF
'MAZING MAN
YOU WILL EVER GET FROM BOB MOLNAR'S STEPHEN DESTEFANO WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM KARL KESEL (INKER) BOB LAPPAN (LETTERER) AND THE EVER POPULAR BOB GREENBERGER (EDITOR)
Play it Safe
Public Health House Sweep
POW!
PAM!

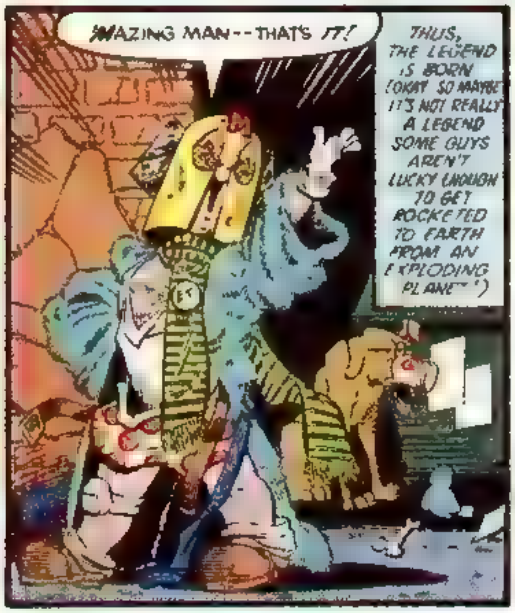
IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT NEW YORKERS THROW AWAY MORE IN A YEAR THAN SOME PEOPLE OWN IN THEIR ENTIRE LIVES...

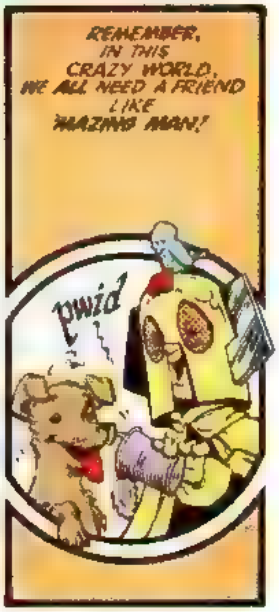

EUREKA!
IT HAS ALSO BEEN SAID THAT ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE--


--OR IN THIS CASE, THE BEGINNING OF ONE MAN'S INSPIRED CAREER
NO LONGER AM I MERELY SIEGFRIED HORATIO HUNCH THE THIRD.. NOW I AM WONDERFUL MAN!

HMMMM

MARVELMAN? MIRACLE MAN? MIGHTY MAN? MUSCLEMAN? 'MAZING MAN?
SWAP SWAP
Library Paste
'MAZING MAN


'MAZING MAN--THAT'S IT!
THUS, THE LEGEND IS BORN (OKAY SO MAYBE IT'S NOT REALLY A LEGEND SOME GUYS AREN'T LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET ROCKETED TO EARTH FROM AN EXPLODING PLANET")


REMEMBER, IN THIS CRAZY WORLD, WE ALL NEED A FRIEND LIKE 'MAZING MAN!
pwid

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Dear Bob and Roy

The Secret Origin of the Golden Age Hawkman " in SECRET ORIGINS #11 was another Roy Thomas blockbuster Once again, DC's master wordsmith has teamed up with two superb artists, in this case Luke McDonnell and the always talented Tony DeZuniga, to pay tribute to another one of DC's golden age greats and the masters who created him. I have nothing but praise for this re telling of the Hawk's beginnings which captured the essence of the era in which it was originally written and of The Hawk s early adventures. Add to that Mary DeZuniga's outstanding lettering and Carl Gafford's marvelous use of colors and the end result is a story worth the $1 25 ($1 75 in Canada) cover price of the comic Nothing short of a master piece

This issue s first story, however, entitled " Ancient Histories ", which supplied Power Girl with a new origin was another matter When Kara first appeared in ALL-STAR COMICS #58 (Jan Feb 1976) I immediately took a liking to the character Not only did I believe that Power Girl had a lot of potential on her own, but I felt that as the cousin of the Earth 2 Superman that the writers might try some things with their relationship that writers wouldn t or couldn t try with the Earth 1 Superman and Supergirl. As time went by, the various writers that handled Power Girl not only met my expectations but exceeded them, resulting in some of the best characterization ever done in comics

When it became apparent that at the end of CRISIS, Kara would need a new beginning, I had some doubts. Part of what made Power Girl so fascinating was that she was a Kryptonian But Kara was and is the type of character that seems to inspire creative genius in all the writers that handle her so I was certain that even though she could no longer be a Kryptonian someone would come up with an origin that would do her justice

Well, now that I have read "Ancient Histories" I realize that I have never been more wrong Not only did this story not do Kara justice but it made me wish that she had joined her cousin, Lois Kent, the Earth 3 Alex Luthor and the Earth prime Superboy on their journey into the unknown

There is so much that bothered me about this story that it is hard to put my finger on any one thing. The art was in desperate need of a good inker to lighten it up, while Carl's coloring, which was so good on the Hawkman origin, was washed out here Albert T DeGuzman s lettering was good, but everything else was so disappointing that his usual fine work was overshadowed But what really bothered me about this new origin of Power Girl was the writing. I have read a number of things by Paul Kupperberg over the years and I know he is capable of much better than this. From beginning to end, "Ancient Histories read in a very jerky fashion with little or no depth to it At times it also seemed rushed as if Paul was more concerned with getting it finished than with the content And when Kara s former Kryptonian past was brushed off in such a casual fashion as being nothing more than an illusion (and Kara accepted Arion s word as fact in an equally casual fashion) as a long time Earth-2 fan I felt insulted While I understand that Krypton could no longer be part of her life, I had hoped that Paul (or someone) would have come up with a much more creative way to incorporate what she believed to be her past into her story

Another thing that bothered me was the miraculous return of Kara s Symbiosship As any long time Power Girl fan knows, Kara destroyed this craft at the end of SHOWCASE #98 (March 1978) to prevent it from taking any further malevolent actions against her And please don't say that on the new earth Kara did not destroy it While I will accept that much of Earth s super hero history will be changed to streamline things, the existence of the craft caused no conflict in DC Continuity before this story was written I don t know what prompted Paul to restore the Symbiship eight years after it had been turned to scrap metal, but its existence only re enforced the already rushed and sloppy appearance of this story

Other than Albert T DeGuzman s lettering, I couldn't find one redeeming quality in this story "Ancient Histories" was nothing more than a rushed attempt to appease the Power Girl fans who demanded some place for her in the new DC Universe, but which may only succeed in destroying the mass popularity that Kara once had I hope that one day some other writer will come along and give Power Girl another origin that will pay tribute to her pre-Crisis past as well as give her a solid footing in the new DC Universe that a character of her potential justly deserves

Jonathan Gilbert
London Ontario Canada

* * * * *

Dear Bob

Well, I now have lost any interest I used to have in Power Girl I knew that there was going to be a new origin for her, because of course there never was an Earth-2 Superman, no matter how many issues of comics to the contrary but giving her to Arion? Sorry, but it didn t work at all At the very least, her new (and now official) origin should have been based on science, not sorcery Even the attempt to deepen Power Girl's character didn t work mainly because the story was so sloppily sentimental especially the last page

Now for the good news. Roy Thomas s re-telling of the Golden Age Hawkman's origin was just fine although Roy hasn t yet been able to top his Batman origin, and the McDonnell/ DeZuniga art team was very effective Also, the cover by Jerry Ordway was a winner

Kevin Lawless
6936 Edgevale Road
Kansas City, MO 64113

Kevin, why should we have given her scientific powers? We thought it might make for some interesting changes by basing super-powers on magic instead

* * * * *

Dear Bob

The long wait to see what DC and Giordano had done to the origin of my second favorite super heroine is over (my first being the late Supergirl). When I heard the rumors that Power Girl would now be a 16-year-old from Atlantis I thought, "Uh-oh!" I began to seriously believe that STAR TREK would be the only DC title that I would buy from now on Wrong! After reading the new origin of PG I thought "Ohmygosh!" DC had actually improved on PG's background. I trust that you folks realize that not only is Kara still a super girl, but that her origin is even more filled with tragedy and pathos than Kal el's for the simple reason that Kara has not lost her planet but rather that she is a woman out of her time Kal, in the new origin was raised an American, whilst Kara even though Arion shattered the Kryptonian illusion, still must have a great deal of that in her mind Other than the truth of her Atlantean heritage there is nothing else to explain and fill her suspended life during the 4500 years she was in hibernation Besides, if Arion felt that Krypton was a worthy life, why not then leave it in her memory It would certainly give her the moral and scientific training that she would need

I was very impressed by the artwork for several reasons First Mary Wilshire

SECRETS BEHIND THE ORIGINS Dept..

Rex "Tick Tock" Tyler—the Man of the Hour—*Hourman*. That's our subject this time

May I make a confession? I'm supposed to be the guy who's always had info about the Justice Society at his fingertips—but when JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA editor Julius Schwartz printed a list of the JSA's charter roll call in JLA #3, 'way back in 1960, I thought the name "Hourmen" must have been a typo for "Starman." *Him* I'd heard of—but Hourman? No way

Within weeks of that black day, however, I obtained a coverless copy of ALL-STAR COMICS #3, and there he was—Hourman, in all his glory. In many ways, the forgotten JSAer . . forgotten mainly because he bowed out of the Society so early.

And his debut had been so promising, too.

ADVENTURE COMICS #48 (March 1940) was the issue which introduced the Hourman (usually spelled back then as "Hour Man" or "Hour-Man"), with art by the same Bernard Bailey who had already worked such wonders with The Spectre only a month before.

Hourman's origin was a bit spotty. his creation of Miracle covered mostly in a single caption in the splash panel, and then he got right down to work at the Beaux Arts Ball, as per this issue of SECRET ORIGINS. (All the better excuse for Dann, Michael Bair, Mike Gustovich, and I to have fun fleshing it out though, so no harm done!)

Not many months later, he was one of several features when ALL-STAR COMICS #1 hit the stands. And of course, two issues after that, he was one of the eight original JSAers, by which time he'd also appeared in the giant-size NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR COMICS #2.

But somehow, he just didn't catch on the way the publishers had hoped. In no time at all he had been replaced on the covers of ADVENTURE by Sandman and (when he debuted in #81) Starman.

DC had high hopes for Ted Knight's stellar I.D., and in ALL-STAR #8 (1941) it was announced that Hourman had taken a "leave of absence" from the JSA—the only one ever granted, and never further explained in the Golden Age—and was being replaced at once by Starman!

Still, Hourman and his teenage Minute Man hung around in ADVENTURE till #83 (February 1943), with his Miracle pills replaced eventually by a small Miracle *ray* which produced the same strength, speed, and (as later revealed) side effects. And his appearances over the years since the JSA returned in the early '60's have probably been better-received than his old solo efforts ever were.

This issue's origin, as stated therein, happily comes out at about the same time as our companion title INFINITY, INC. #40, in which young Rick Tyler learns for the first time that, despite his own problems with the side effects of Miracle, his father wanted to help him eventually become the *second* Hourman.

"The Secret Origin of the Golden Age Hourman", however, is meant to stand on its own two feet—and with breath-taking art by the likes of Michael Bair and Mike Gustovich, we think it does just that.

—Roy Thomas

has made PG into a beautiful, but realistic looking woman. Power Girl is still voluptuous, sensual and yet, still appearing to very much be a woman that one might meet on the street. One item in the art that particularly impressed me was the fact that her eyebrows were not only drawn in hair by hair but that there is at least one colorist who realizes that very often blonde women have blonde eyebrows, not black.

A couple of last thoughts. Power Girl's overall attitude and personality is very 1980s-ish and I feel that if DC does not tinker with her, Power Girl can become the character that Supergirl was never allowed to become. Her potential is such that she could easily become the definitive female colleague to Superman. Thank you, also, for keeping Power Girl at the age of 20 to 21.

Larry A. Hager
85 Southgate
Bloomington, IL 61701

* * * * *

Dear Roy and Bob,

SECRET ORIGINS #11 had more cross-continuity than I ever expected. Of course, all the press releases and advance news columns said that Arion would show up in Power Girl's new improved origin. I'm glad you tied up all the loose ends from the old series. Arion deserved a good ending, and I find it interesting that Mara, of all people, became queen. I presume she came damn close to marrying Wynnde eventually, and that Arion married Chian, since Kara is his granddaughter. And the mention of colonies that disappeared brings Skartaris to mind.

But that wasn't the most interesting part. It was the little thing that connected this story to the next that caught my attention. I'm sure plenty of people spotted it, too.

Arion's grandson was a blond boy named Khater. The Shepherd Kings of Egypt were preceded by an unusually blond-haired prince named Khufu, who was later reincarnated as Carter Hall, the Hawkman of the 1940s. It doesn't take too much to put together that Khater was reincarnated as Khufu, thus explaining how Khufu, an Egyptian, had blond hair. Some of Arion's magic, in Khufu's genes, carried over the blond code, that's all.

Do I get a prize for stating the obvious or what?

Oh, and need I also say how much I enjoyed the Golden Age Hawkman's origin? The extra detailed attention paid to actual history helped give the re-telling a very authentic air, and the Egyptian scenes read and flowed very well.

I have a question, though. If Khater was reincarnated as Khufu and Carter who were the Atlantean base personas for Hastor/Hath Set and Shiera? At one point, Carter tells Hastor (actually, it's Khufu telling Hath-Set; this gets confusing) that only the two of them could hope to wield the power Hath-Set wants, because both know the "old secrets" equally well. Could those secrets be Atlantean magic?

Anthony R. Cardno
238 Center Drive
Mahopac, NY 10541

Actually, everyone spent so much time and energy telling us they didn't like the Power Girl origin, no one but you noticed the little throwaway link. Glad to see someone is watching closely. No prizes, that's handled at the Great Big Company downtown. Ask for Mark Gruenwald. Yes, the secrets could be Atlantean magic but that's a secret revealed at some other time.

* * * * *

COMING ATTRACTIONS

First, an announcement. This is my last issue as co-editor of SECRET ORIGINS. I have taken on some additional administrative work for the company plus I am developing two new mini-series so something had to go. Dick Giordano, our lovable leader, thought it made sense to give half the book to Roy's faithful assistant editor, Greg Weisman. Wish Greg luck, next month as he brings you:

Adam Strange. The intergalactic hero, savior of Rann and husband to beautiful Alanna, gets his past revealed by Gerry Conway, Carmine Infantino and Tony DeZuniga. Roy then joins us again with the origin of Dr. Occult, DC's first super-hero. Making his artistic debut is Howard Simpson, a newcomer you will be hearing more about.

Also out next month is our first annual. 64 powerful pages beginning with the origin of the Doom Patrol—new and old—by Paul Kupperberg and John Byrne. Rounding out the issue is Roy and Ron Harris re-telling of Captain Comet's career.

This month's creators include Bob Rozakis and Stephen DeStefano who will bring you the MAZING MAN SPECIAL in just two weeks. Michael Fleisher regularly writes WARLORD and MASK while Adam Kubert just pencilled a recent STAR TREK. Roy of course has the new YOUNG ALL-STARS and INFINITY, INC. Michael Bair was a contributor to YAS's first issue and Mike Gustovich has inked numerous stories in these pages.

It's been a lot of fun working on this title and I honestly will miss it. Keep those cards and letters coming, otherwise we'll never know how we're doing! And, as always, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger

September 14, 1985

Dear Rick,

Like so many fathers and sons, you and I have always found it hard to really TALK to each other.

Nor is there any use denying that things have become even more strained since your use of one of my Miracle Pills recently during the tremors in Los Angeles...and your subsequent desire to become a NEW Hourman, against my wishes.

Hence this letter, which will be given to you by Dr. McNider upon my death or extended disappearance.

Short of denying you the Secret Formula for making Miracle, Rick, I don't know of any way to dissuade you from trying to become that most unique and potentially lonely of human beings, a so-called "Super-Hero."

Still, before you make a final decision, I hope you'll at least reflect on MY life as a masked crime fighter, and most especially on...

THE SECRET ORIGIN OF THE GOLDEN AGE HOURMAN

You know some of the facts already, of course. But not all. Far from all.

It was New Year's Eve, 1939.. the ragged tail-end of a year that had seen much of the world go to war.

Strange, what I still remember about that night, after all this time: the shrieking wind... that granite clockface so grim and cold.. and my own obsessive resolve which drove away all my usual fears.

All fears except the worst, of course--that gnawing fear of myself.

HERO HOUR--ONE MINUTE TO ELEVEN--

ROY & DANN THOMAS
WRITERS

MICHAEL BAIR
PENCILLER

MIKE GUSTOVICH
INKER

CARL GAFFORD
COLORIST

WEISS & MAS
LETTERER

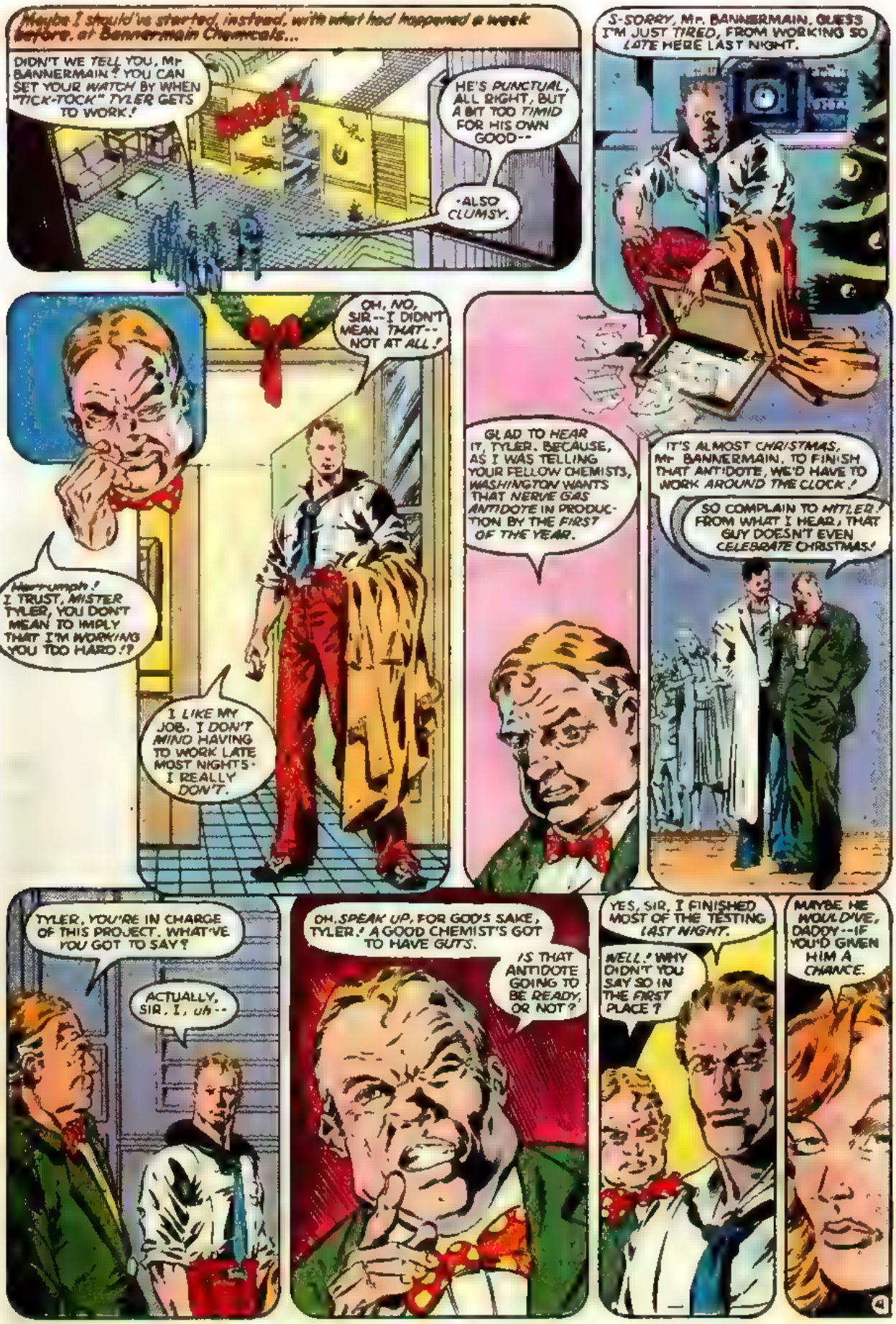
ROBERT GREENBERGER
COORDINATING EDITOR

ROY THOMAS
CREATIVE EDITOR

ADAPTED IN PART FROM THE STORY DRAWN BY BERNARD BAILEY IN ADVENTURE COMICS #48, 1940

NO SENSE WAITING AROUND ANY LONGER
MIRACLO, DO YOUR STUFF!
for just be on that clock a crime was about to occur
And I was just young and headstrong enough to believe that, with the help of the new drug I'd concocted, I could prevent it
ATTENTION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
--IT'S ELEVEN O CLOCK AND THE GRAND MARCH OF THE BEAUX ARTS BALL IS ABOUT TO BEGI--
SAY NOW! WHAT THE DEUCE HAPPENED TO THE LIGHTS?
NO NEED FOR ALARM. I'M SURE THE LIGHTS WILL BE RESTORED MOMENTARILY.
AND WHOEVER JUST PULLED MY TAIL IS GOING TO BE FLOORED MOMENTARILY
SORRY, MADAM
DAMNED INCONVENIENT!
I THOUGHT BLACKOUTS ONLY HAPPENED IN EUROPE
I crouched overhead
..waiting for the crooks to show themselves, and my Miracle to kick in
As luck would have it the bad guys showed first
ALL RIGHT- NOBODY MOVES, NOBODY GETS DRILLED!

I strained like crazy to see what was happening beneath my perch - but I was as blind in the dark as everyone else --
SEE HERE ! YOU CAN'T.
SWK
BUT WE CAN !
--everyone but the intruders, that is. They were wearing special infra-red goggles which allowed them to find just what they'd come for
M-MY PEARLS--!
GOT 'EM, BOYS.! NOW LET'S SCRAM BEFORE SOMEBODY TURNS ON THE LIGHTS !
Miracle or not--
--I had to make my move.
HIGH TIME SOMEBODY TURNED OUT YOUR LIGHTS, TOUGH GUY!
WH ? YOU!?!
Good thing for me he was so startled, he never got off a shot.
KU
MPF!
As it was, I suddenly realized there were still three heads at large in that huge ballroom--
--each of whom could see about a thousand times better than I could!
CRAZY JERK!
BOK
NOBODY HAD TO GET HURT!
YOU'LL LEARN, KENTON, THERE'S ALWAYS SOME FOOL IN EVERY CROWD THAT WANTS TO PLAY HERO!
OKAY, OKAY! THE POOR SCHMOE'S DOWN FOR THE COUNT, ANYWAY!
Kenton was right. So far both Hourman and Miracle had proved considerably less than miraculous that night.
Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself, Rick...
3

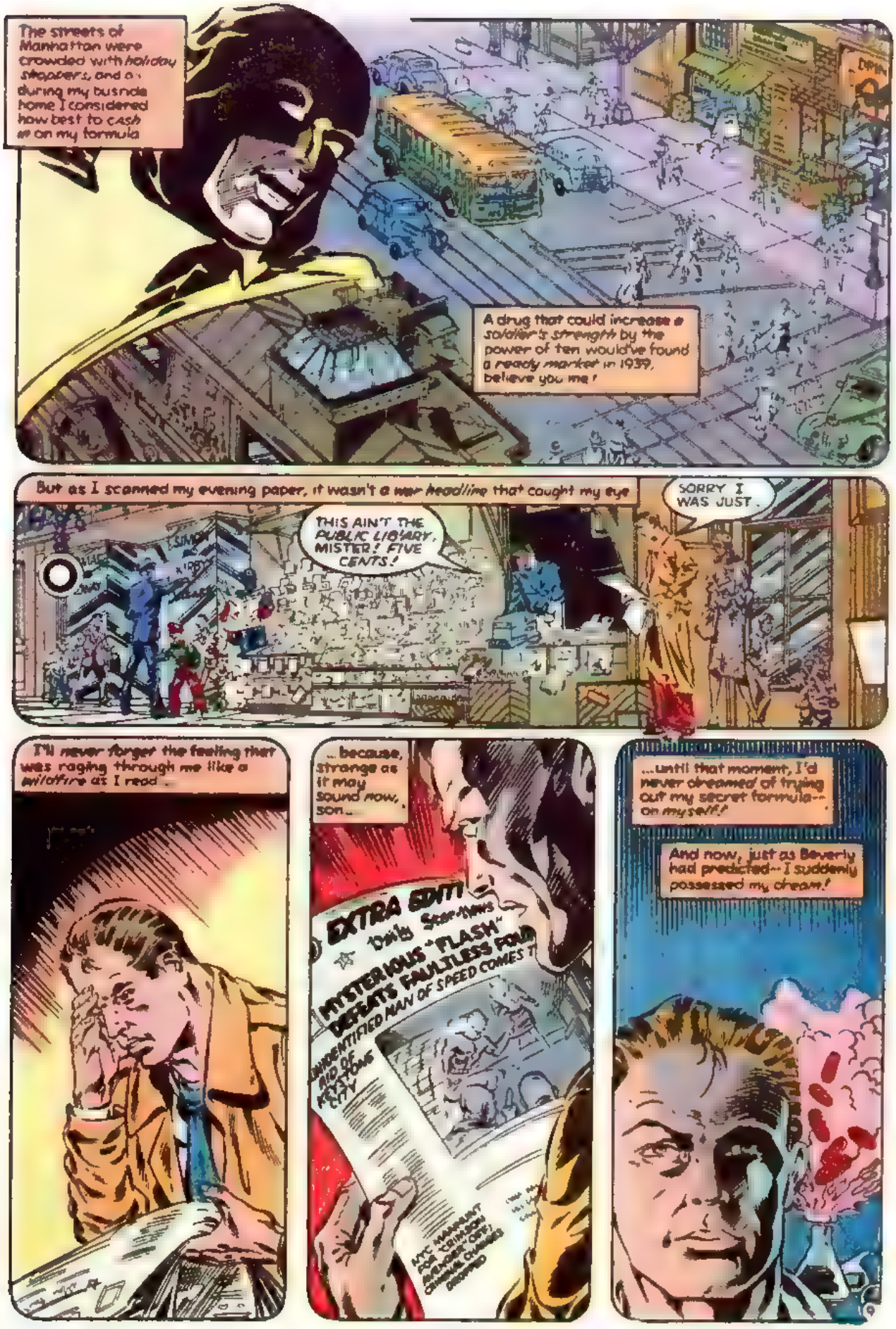

Maybe I should've started, instead, with what had happened a week before, at Bannermain Chemicals...
DIDN'T WE TELL YOU, Mr BANNERMAIN? YOU CAN SET YOUR WATCH BY WHEN "TICK-TOCK" TYLER GETS TO WORK!
HE'S PUNCTUAL, ALL RIGHT, BUT A BIT TOO TIMID FOR HIS OWN GOOD--
-ALSO CLUMSY.
S-SORRY, Mr. BANNERMAIN. GUESS I'M JUST TIRED, FROM WORKING SO LATE HERE LAST NIGHT.
OH, NO, SIR--I DIDN'T MEAN THAT--NOT AT ALL!
Harrumph! I TRUST, MISTER TYLER, YOU DON'T MEAN TO IMPLY THAT I'M WORKING YOU TOO HARD!?
I LIKE MY JOB. I DON'T MIND HAVING TO WORK LATE MOST NIGHTS. I REALLY DON'T.
GLAD TO HEAR IT, TYLER. BECAUSE, AS I WAS TELLING YOUR FELLOW CHEMISTS, WASHINGTON WANTS THAT NERVE GAS ANTIDOTE IN PRODUCTION BY THE FIRST OF THE YEAR.
IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS, Mr BANNERMAIN. TO FINISH THAT ANTIDOTE, WE'D HAVE TO WORK AROUND THE CLOCK!
SO COMPLAIN TO HITLER! FROM WHAT I HEAR, THAT GUY DOESN'T EVEN CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS!
TYLER, YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THIS PROJECT. WHAT'VE YOU GOT TO SAY?
ACTUALLY, SIR, I, uh--
OH, SPEAK UP, FOR GOD'S SAKE, TYLER! A GOOD CHEMIST'S GOT TO HAVE GUTS.
IS THAT ANTIDOTE GOING TO BE READY, OR NOT?
YES, SIR, I FINISHED MOST OF THE TESTING LAST NIGHT.
WELL! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE?
MAYBE HE WOULD'VE, DADDY--IF YOU'D GIVEN HIM A CHANCE.
4

"Beverly Bannerman the boss's daughter, was a darn good chemist herself
"Career lab women were a rare breed in those days. Of course, I didn't really think of her as a woman then. Not too often, anyway
JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT REX THAT BRINGS OUT THE BULLY IN YOU, DADDY ?
I'VE GOT NO STOMACH FOR MILQUETOASTS, GIRL. NEVER DID.
WHY HE EVEN PUNCHES THE TIME CLOCK LIKE A WEAKLING!
SEEMS YOU'RE DOING AN ADEQUATE JOB, AFTER ALL, TYLER. KEEP IT UP.
YES, SIR.
NOT ME, JONESY. WHATEVER GAVE YOU THAT IDEA ?
HEY, TICK-TOCK ! I HEAR YOU INVENTED SYNTHETIC RUBBER.
WELL, THE FELLAS AND I FIGURED YOU MUST BE USING SOMETHING FOR A BACKBONE, SO -- HEY!
YOU IN THE MOOD TO GO JOB-HUNTING TODAY, JONESY?
I SORRY, MISS BANNERMAN !
GUESS I WALKED RIGHT INTO THAT ONE, BEVERLY
DON'T LET 'EM GET YOU DOWN, REX
YOU'RE SMARTER THAN ANY OF THEM, AND THEY KNOW IT.
YOU'VE JUST GOT TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF MORE, THAT'S ALL. SO WHY DON'T YOU ?
I GUESS I'M JUST NOT A FIGHTER, BEVERLY.
I'M SATISFIED JUST DOING MY JOB --
PUTTING IN MY TIME --!
BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, REX -- NOT FOR YOU --
-- NOT UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE JUST ANOTHER COG IN DADDY'S MIGHTY, MARVELOUS MACHINE !

Got to hand it to ol' Bev, Rick -- she never pulled any punches with me. And that gave me the courage to be honest with her.
COMING OF AGE DURING THIS DEPRESSION CAN MAKE A MAN AWFULLY GRATEFUL TO BE A COG -- AN EMPLOYED COG -- INSTEAD OF STANDING IN LINE AT SOME SOUP KITCHEN SOMEWHER
WHY DO YOU THINK JONESY BACKED DOWN SO FAST, WHEN YOU PULLED RANK ON HIM AS THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER?
I REALIZE THESE ARE HARD TIMES, REX
JUST BECAUSE I'M WHO I AM DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T UNDERSTAND
YES, IT DOES, BEVERLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE MONEY HAVE NO CONCEPT OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE POOR.
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT MONEY REX TYLER I'M TALKING ABOUT AMBITION AND THE COURAGE TO GO FOR YOUR DREAMS
BUT I COULD BE I'M TALKING TO THE WRONG MAN ENTIRELY
IN WHICH CASE, I APOLOGIZE FOR TAKING SO MUCH OF YOUR -- I MEAN, OF DADDY'S TIME
Just another version of a conversation we'd had a hundred times before.
But as this day wore on, Beverly's words began to weigh heavy on my mind.
'NIGHT, REX
YOU KNOW, BEVERLY, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER, AND -- WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY TONIGHT, I WAS WONDERING IF MAYBE --
BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL AGAIN, TYLER?
WELL, SUIT YOURSELF! JUST DON'T EXPECT ANY OVERTIME PAY FROM ME, ALL RIGHT?
I DIDN'T, SIR, BUT --
COME ALONG, BEVERLY WE DON'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR THE CARNIVAL.
WE MIGHT MISS THE CLOWNS -- AND THEY'RE MY FAVORITE.
NATURALLY, DADDY
'NIGHT AGAIN, REX MAYBE ANOTHER TIME.

So I went back to work. Not, though, on any project Boss Bannerman knew about.
...but on one of my own.
A secret formula I'd been developing in my off-work hours.
You know what I'm talking about, son--MIRACLO. Only at this point I haven't names name on it yet.
COME ON OUT, RASPUTIN
TIME FOR YOUR COCOA
I'd tried various proportions over the past few months, with no measurable effects--except that that greedy lab-rat got fatter and fatter.
I FAILED AGAIN, HUH? OKAY, SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW, RIGHT?
WELL, IT'S BACK TO THE OLD DRAWING-BOARD FOR ME, AND BACK TO YOUR CAGE FOR--
EEEKKPP!
GOOD LORD!
COME BACK HERE, YOU CRAZY RODENT!
EEEEGRK
GOT YOU!
As it turned out my victory crow was a bit premature - because for the first time -

--my formula had WORKED!
Grapp ng w th that rat now wa ke wrest ng a wildcat- and maybe I do mean Ted Grant-
- for its strength and stamina had both been increased a thousandfold!
KATHAK-!
SKREE!
For nearly an hour, Rasputin led me on an exhausting chase a- around the lab.
until I was very nearly in a state of collapse
:pant!: RASPUTIN! RASPUTIN! :pant!: WHERE THE HECK ARE YOU?
At first, when I found him, I was afraid he was dead
POOR LITTLE FELLA :pant!:
Considering what we'd just been through, a heart attack for one of us didn't seem unlikely
But his heart was still beating, and he revived as soon as I returned him to his cage.
THAT'S ENOUGH EXCITEMENT--:pant!: --FOR YOU
FROM NOW ON, YOU TAKE YOUR COCOA STRAIGHT
THE WORLD CAN ALWAYS USE A BETTER MOUSE TRAP--
--BUT MAYBE NOT A SUPER-STRONG RAT!
Click
I'd learned a lot about my new drug that night
If rats could talk, I'd have learned a lot more--
Eeeeep
- I like about the accursed spraying the formula leaves in its wake!
Eeeeep
8


The streets of Manhattan were crowded with holiday shoppers, and as during my bus ride home I considered how best to cash in on my formula
A drug that could increase a soldier's strength by the power of ten would've found a ready market in 1939, believe you me!
But as I scanned my evening paper, it wasn't a war headline that caught my eye
THIS AIN'T THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, MISTER! FIVE CENTS!
SORRY I WAS JUST.
I'll never forget the feeling that was raging through me like a wildfire as I read...
...because, strange as it may sound now, son...
EXTRA EDITION
Daily Star-News
MYSTERIOUS "FLASH" DEFEATS FAULTLESS FOE
UNIDENTIFIED MAN OF SPEED COMES TO AID OF KEYSTONE CITY
NYC MANHUNT FOR "CRIMSON AVENGER" OFF; CRIMINAL CHARGES DROPPED
...until that moment, I'd never dreamed of trying out my secret formula--on myself!
And now, just as Beverly had predicted--I suddenly possessed my dream!

What greater ambition could a weak and basically timid man have than to become strong and powerful
...like those daring mystery men who had so recently come upon the urban scene!
Hawkman... Sandman The Spectre ..all close comrades of mine, since we got together to found The Justice Society
At that moment, they were but faceless idols... yet idols they were nonetheless
And I longed to be one of them... more than I'd longed for anything in my entire life
My first impulse was to tell Beverly-- not because I loved her, Rick, not as I love your mother...
--but because she was my best, maybe my only, friend.
10

As I strode toward the cacophony of crowd and calliope, I could feel my old familiar doubts and fears gaining on me fast.

I knew there'd hardly been time for any side effects of this new drug to show up, even in Rasputin, and my body makeup was more complicated than that of a lab rat

But what the hell. . I was young and foolish, not unlike some other impatient people I've known... so..

I'LL SHOW THEM

I'LL SHOW THEM ALL!

I gulped down my first daily dose of MIRACLO before common sense could get a hammerlock on my nerves...

just like you did, Rick, the day earthquake and fire ravaged Sunset Medical.

And, just like you at first, I felt... nothing.

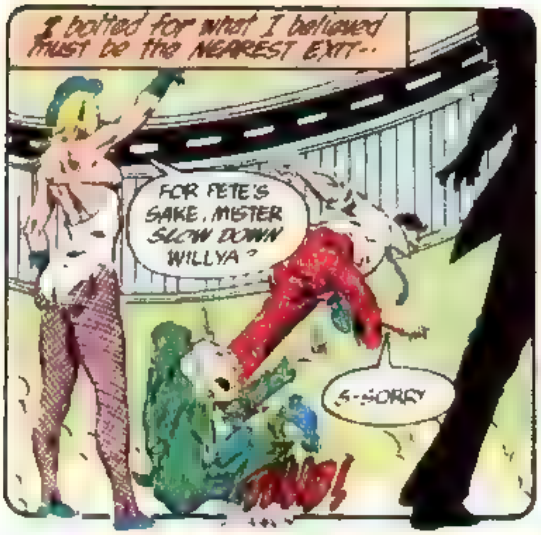
No surge of strength, no increase in pulse rate .. and as for agility, well ...

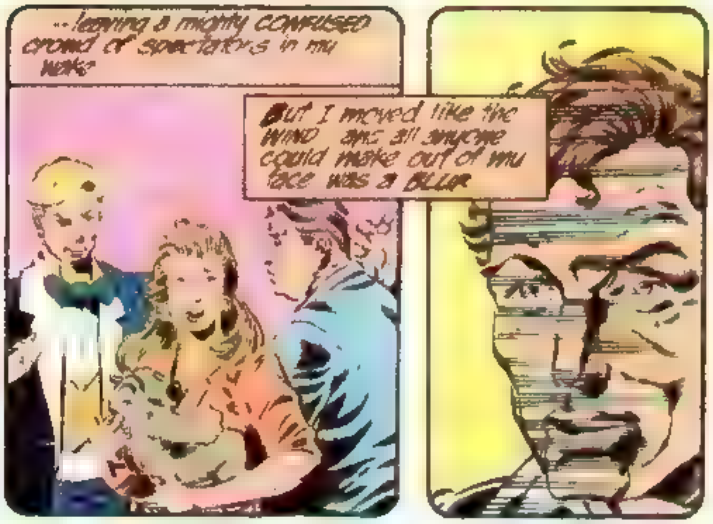
.. my leaden leg muscles wouldn't have let me leap as high as a clown with weighted shoes...

.. let alone the graceful acrobats who plied their dangerous trade high above

No use looking for Beverly now. The fact of my failure would hardly be news to her, or anyone else
Just then--
C'MON, GENTS - TWO BITS BUYS YOU A SHOT AT FAME AND FORTUNE!
RING THE BELL, AND YOU'RE TEN DOLLARS RICHER!
HOW 'BOUT YOU, SIR?
SURELY YOU'RE NOT AFRAID TO PUT YOUR MANHOOD TO A LITTLE TEST?
Guess I'm no more immune to that pitch than any other young male..
HERE'S A QUARTER. Uh.. WOULD YOU MIND HOLDING MY COAT?
CERTAINLY! THE CUSTOMER GETS EVERY ADVANTAGE. GO AHEAD
Advantage, my Aunt Sadie! There was more than just gravity to overcome in that little game, if you know what I mean
Even at my puniest, I should have done better than that
OH, TOO BAD! MAYBE YOU WEREN'T WARMED UP ENOUGH.
ONLY 25¢ TO TRY 'ER AGAIN! WADDA YOU SAY SPORT?
I was about to snatch my coat back from that two-bit swindler--
--when I suddenly spotted Beverly with her dad--
-- and she was turning my way.
I was lived! The thought of playing the 90-pound weakling in front of Beverly again was just too much to bear
Anger seized me And with anger came something else.
Something I'd never felt before
WHOOSH
My Miracle had finally kicked in!
12

Much as I'd longed to be strong, the JOLT of the adrenaline explosion within me was nothing less than TERRIFYING!
And, get know what?
HEY!
OUT OF MY WAY.. PLEASE!




..leaving a mighty CONFUSED crowd of spectators in my wake
But I moved like the WIND and all anyone could make out of my face was a BLUR

Even the BANNER-brains hadn't recognized me- which was FORTUNATE, as things turned out
Only, we MISS-TOOK the DOOR I mistook for an exit actually was locked
A STORE ROOM DAMN

I was TRAPPED! No way out but the way I'd come in and I KNEW that any second there'd be COMPANY coming on that door

I'd wanted to keep any SECRETS that night I'd have to act FAST

Just in the nick of TIME, too!
HE WENT IN THERE-- SO THAT MUST BE HIM!
WE'VE GOT HIM NOW, BOYS! NO MAN BUSTS MY PROPERTY AND GETS AWAY WITH IT!
AIN'T THAT EVEN ONE OF OUR ACROBAT OUTFITS HE'S SPORTIN'?
WE'LL CREAM THE RUBE FOR YA MORT--AN' STUFF WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM THROUGH THE COTTON CANDY MACHINE!
SO I opted to "fly" for an ALTERNATE out.
And wouldn't you know--IT WORKED!
HKRRK HKKKK
The old brick wall SHATTERED before my fist like a stack of WHEATIES BOXES!
Once on the pavement outside I instinctively looked for a FIRE ESCAPE--
SPROING!
--and found myself on the ROOF instead.
I DON'T GET IT HE JUST--DISAPPEARED!
MAYBE WE'RE LUCKY--CONSIDERING WHAT HE DID TO THAT WALL.
14
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

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SECRET ORIGINS
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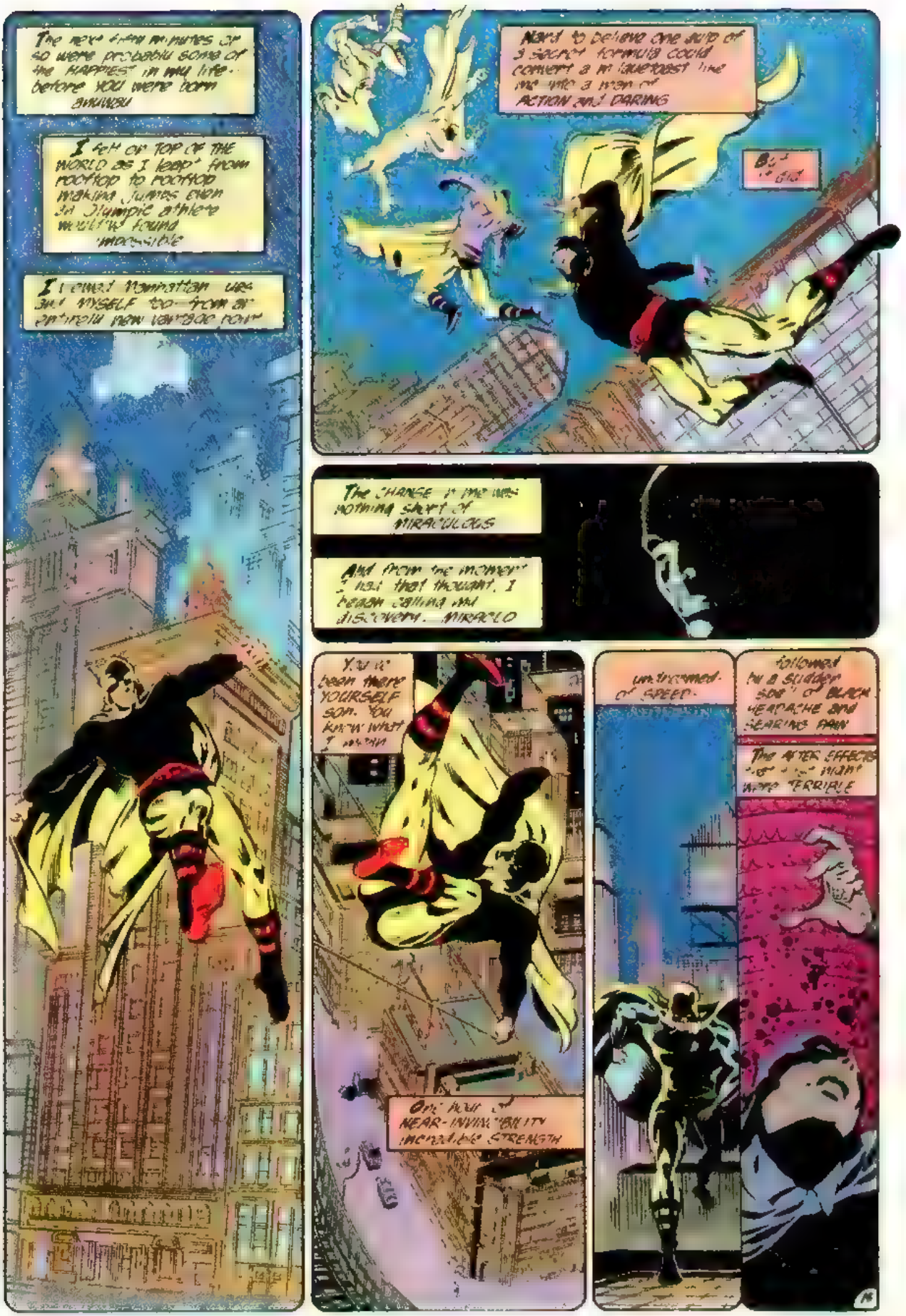

The next few minutes or so were probably some of the HAPPIEST in my life - before YOU were born SHAZAM!
I felt on TOP OF THE WORLD as I leap* from rooftop to rooftop making jumps even an Olympic athlete wouldn't found impossible
I COULD DEMONSTRATE ON MYSELF TOO - FROM AN ENTIRELY NEW VANTAGE POINT
Hard to believe one jolt of a secret formula could convert a mild-mannered kid into a man of ACTION AND DARING
BLAM
The CHANGE in me was NOTHING short of MIRACULOUS
And from the MOMENT I first thought, I began calling my discovery... MIRACLO
You've been there YOURSELF son. You know what I mean
One hour of NEAR-INVINCIBILITY INCREDIBLE STRENGTH
unleashed SPEED
followed by a sudden SOB of BLACK HEADACHE and SEARING PAIN
The AFTER EFFECTS

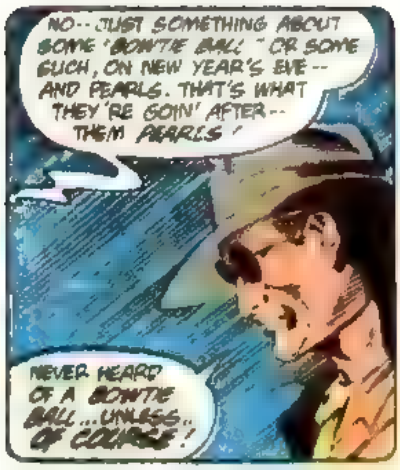
But I was confident I could ELIMINATE the ill effects of my drug-- PURIFY the formula-- make it PERFECT. You see
Even then I was HOOKED - and just didn't KNOW it
I knew I would be willing to ENDURE the pain while using my own body as a living TEST TUBE
And I swore never to tell ANOTHER soul the precise formula for M-RACHE- till I'd made it SAFE for myself and others.
That was 45 YEARS AGO, son-- and it hasn't happened YET.
What's more, it wasn't until I went back to the LAB that night that I learned the WORST side effect of all
I was about to toss that crazy arrogant suit into the trash, when I impulsively decided to HIDE it behind RASPUTIN'S cage instead
Guess I was already getting the MYSTERY MAN BUG

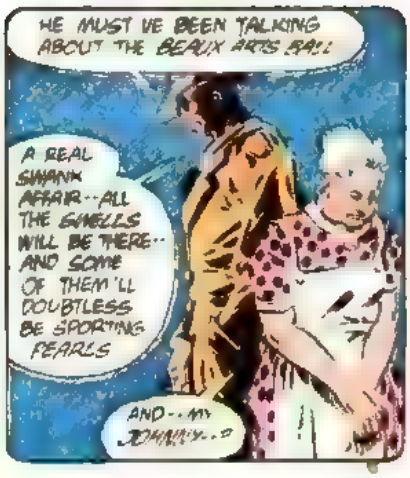
Just then--
REEEEEEK
MY GOD, RASPUTIN-- WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

His tiny paws were BLOODIED from clawing at the bars of his cage. I'd left the M-RACHE-doused COCOA just beyond them and he'd become FRENZIED trying to get the cup
In a weird ADDICTION

But already I was rationalizing that RASPUTIN was, after all, just a dumb animal.
Nothing like that would ever happen to ME
16

That night I lay sleepless, making big plans for MIRACLO and the NEW MAN I had made of me
Until Miracio was fully tested, I'd accept "hot acrobat's" suit so neither Commissioner or the public would know it was REX TYLER who'd made the breakthrough
"TICK-TOCK," they'd called me--and the effects of Miracio had lasted almost exactly SIXTY MINUTES
SO, temporarily, I'd take my name from THOSE CUES
One hour seemed hardly long enough to solve ALL the problems in the world. Still, optimist that I was, I placed a CLASSIFIED AD the very next day.
PERSONAL
-ATTENTION-
YOUNG MAN, ANXIOUS TO HELP THE OPPRESSED OFFERS SERVICES FREE TO ALL WHO NEED HIM. APPLY BY MAIL TO 328 S. 8 ST. PLACE, NYC.
FOO! THE WEEK I WAS, THE WEEK I RECEIVED MORE MAIL THAN SANTA CLAUS.
MAYBE I SHOULD GET A POST OFFICE BOY HUH FELLAS?
UHHH"... WE'D SURE APPRECIATE IT
The HEARTY RESPONSE to my ad ought to tell you, RICK, just how TOUGH times were back then. But ONE letter PARTICULARLY GOT TO ME...
Dear Sir--
Since my son lost his job, I have been almost crazy trying to keep him from going around with the gang that is making a THIEF of him.
Johnny was a good and loving son once--before circumstances began pushing him into a life of crime.
Please help him before it is too late!
Hopefully, Mrs R. Henton
That afternoon Mrs. Henton explained her son's dilemma to me in greater detail...
JOHNNY'S SO-CALLED "FRIENDS" LOANED HIM MONEY SO WE COULD PAY OUR RENT..
NOW, THEY'RE FORCIN HIM TO REPAY THEM IN THE ONLY WAY HE CAN--BY HELPIN' THEM IN A ROBBERY!
YOUR SON TOLD YOU THIS HIMSELF?
LANDSAKES NO! I OVERHEARD HIM WHISPERIN' ABOUT IT ON THE PHONE WHEN HE THOUGHT I WAS OUT MARKETIN'.
WHAT'S THIS GANG GOING TO ROB? DID YOU HEAR PRECISELY?
17


NO--JUST SOMETHING ABOUT SOME 'BOWTIE BALL" OR SOME SUCH, ON NEW YEAR'S EVE--AND PEARLS. THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE GOIN' AFTER--THEM PEARLS'
NEVER HEARD OF A BOWTIE BALL...UNLESS... OF COURSE!


HE MUST'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE BEAUX ARTS BALL
A REAL SWANK AFFAIR--ALL THE SWELLS WILL BE THERE--AND SOME OF THEM'LL DOUBTLESS BE SPORTING PEARLS
AND--MY JOHNNY--?

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO STOP HIM MRS KENTON. YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT.
BUT THOSE WORDS? WHO ARE YOU, MISTER BEHIND THEM DARK GLASSES?
JUST CALL ME--THE HOURMAN

For the next seventy days I prepared for my debut as a crime-buster, even donning a special hourglass to hang around my neck, for precise timing of the duration of my powers. Then there was nothing to do but sit back and wait for New Year's Eve--when HOURMAN and MIRACLO would be put to their FIRST REAL TEST

I thought then it was the wait that made me so nervous and anxious. I know now it was my CRAVING for MIRACLO starting to build.

Finally, the night arrived - and backstage at the ball just before dawn -
WE WAIT FOR THE GRAND MARCH - THEN CUT THE LIGHTS GOT IT?
LOUD AND CLEAR BOSS
FOUND THAT SWITCH YET, KENTON?

YES AND SOMETHING ELSE--
WHAT?
KENTON! GO HOME BEFORE YOU BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S HEART--AND WIND UP IN JAIL! THE HOURMAN
N-NEVER MIND. IT WAS--NOTHING

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So that's how I ended up at the REALM ARTS BALL for my first real outing as a mystery-man. Thanks to my body's growing RESISTANCE, my MIRACLE pill hadn't KICKED IN... so the gang's JEWEL HEIST had got off to a successful start.
I recovered and ran outside -- just as their CAR roared away from the curb...
VROOM
COME ON, MIRACLO -- WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, ANYWAY?
And then -- I began to FEEL something.
In seconds, I'd OVERTAKEN the getaway car...
-- and turned around to BLOCK ITS PATH.
Big mistake.
KWAM!
STRONG I was.
IMMOVABLE I was NOT.
Still, I was so FAST -- so RESILIENT -- that I'd avoided serious hurt.
I'd proved to myself I could TAKE it --
And, as I landed firmly on my two feet, ready to continue the chase, I was ready to show I could DISH it out, as well!
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Just then, we had company -- as a siren-screaming police car joined the pursuit.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
But one of the crooks got off a few shots. He didn't hit anybody inside --
-- but the RESULT was the same.
KRAASSH!
As I saw the cops scramble from their burning car, I knew the men I was chasing were an even more DESPERATE breed than I'd imagined. Not just ROBBERS... but potential MURDERERS.
Maybe I couldn't keep my promise to MRS. KENTON, after all.
Maybe I shouldn't even TRY.
It was MIDNIGHT when I managed to track them back to their HIDEOUT...
HAPPY NEW YEAR, BOYS--AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING!
BUT-- YOU SAID-- NO KILLING -- REMEMBER?
WE SAID NO UNNECESSARY KILLING. THOSE COPPERS HAD IT COMING!
YOU GOT ANY PROBLEMS WITH THAT, KENTON? MAYBE WE MIGHT HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU-- THE HARD WAY!
YOU CAN EXPLAIN IT TO A JUDGE AND JURY, RATS! I HEARD EVERYTHING!
SM.
ASSSH!
URRG
IT'S THAT WOULD-BE HERO FROM THE BALL!
LEAVE 'IM TO ME, BOSS!
22

I was in no mood to fool
quibs with those vermin. For
one thing, I was still
ENRAGED by the sight of
that crashing POLICE CAR.
THUK!
FOR another, I didn't
KNOW EXACTLY how
much of my "HOUR
OF POWER" I had left--
--but I knew
it couldn't
be MUCH.
SO I got
right to
WORK.
WHERE 'RE YOU
GOING, DEVIL-
MAY-CARE?
GGAAAAAA!
KRAK!
BACK TO HELL,
MAYBE?
THEN I'D BE
THE LAST GUY
IN THE WORLD TO
DETAIN YOU!
YOU
INTERFERING--!
YOU'RE NEXT
ON THE LIST,
BOSS-MAN...
ARRRGH
SOK!
HOW!
THANKS
FOR WAITING
YOUR TURN!
For a minute, I went
WILD, filled with visions
of what they'd DONE--
to the COPS, to me,
and maybe to JOHNNY
KENTON'S LIFE.
I was on such a HIGH, I
had to force myself to STOP,
before I KILLED them.
CHUDD
KRAK
CHOK
21

FINALLY, I left the three of them in one crumpled PEARL-TOPPED PILE for the POLICE to find...
...and JOHNNY KENTON? Well, he'd claimed before me that NO CHOICE but to join the gang. I was about to give him a choice.
MASKED MAN--HOURMAN--FOR GOD'S SAKE, PLEASE--!
WHAT'LL IT BE, KENTON? THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW FROM NOW ON--
--OR A ONE-WAY TRIP TO TENTH AVENUE WITHOUT A PARACHUTE!
Y-YOU GOT ME ALL WRONG! IT WASN'T MY FAULT!
THAT'S YOUR EXCUSE? TWO COPS COULD'VE DIED TONIGHT. SO I'M SORRY, MAMA'S BOY--
--YOUR EXCUSE JUST AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH!
NO--NO--
--PLEEEEASE--!
OKAY, KENTON, I WON'T LET YOU DIE TONIGHT--
--FOR YOUR MOTHER'S SAKE, IF NOT FOR YOUR OWN!
TH-TH-THANK YOU! I--I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT--JUST H-HAUL ME UP!
Just then, I started feeling woozy, as the MIRACLO WORE OFF--but I faked it through as I hauled him in..
THAT'S--YOUR PROBLEM, KENTON.
YOU'D DO ANYTHING TO SAVE YOUR SKIN--OR PAY THE RENT. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE IN THIS SCRAPE.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M WEAK--ALWAYS LET MYSELF BE PUSHED AROUND.
MUST BE HARD FOR A MUSCLE-MAN LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND...
EASIER THAN YOU THINK, KENTON.
NOW GET OUT OF HERE. YOU'VE HAD YOUR BREAK--
--THE ONLY ONE YOU'RE EVER GONNA GET FROM THE HOURMAN!
IT'S... THE ONLY ONE I'LL EVER NEED... I SWEAR IT!
And guess what? Johnny Kenton KEPT his word.... All my life, Rick, I've failed to make Miraclo safe for my own use. Maybe I failed because just my own health wasn't MOTIVE enough. But now, with YOUR well-being at stake, as well, I've been working harder than ever. And I'm close--VERY close. Just be patient a little longer, son, and I promise that, when Miraclo is finally perfected, I'll give it with my blessing--to the SECOND-GENERATION HOURMAN.
All my love--DAD
The FIRST HOURMAN is gone now, with the rest of the JUSTICE SOCIETY. But his son, Rick Tyler--HOURMAN II--received this letter in INFINITY, INC. #40, now on sale.